

IN & AROUND THE TERRACES

Information and news for Residents

Spring 2019



Welcome to the Spring issue of the RRCTMA newsletter!

Spring has now fully sprung and greenery, blossom and flowers have been abundantly in presence - as have tourists! And we have even already had a few sunny days of twenties centigrade temperatures - hopefully the summer will give us some more days like that. More locally, we continue to have to deal with the frustration of the traffic problems due to the St. James and Picardy Place developments and perhaps soon the trams. More on all these topics - and some more uplifting ones below.

POLENTONI - ITALIAN BAKERY AND KITCHEN ON EASTER ROAD



If you stroll about 80 metres down the right of Easter Road from London Road traffic lights, you will come across a little slice of Northern Italy at number 38. Polentoni was established five years ago by husband and wife team Franco and Sarah Praticò.

“Polentoni” is the name given to Northern rural Italians by sophisticated city Italians so has similar connotation to the Scottish

“teuchter”. However, being Italy it has to do with food, the name deriving from the widespread use of polenta in the diet of Northern Italy made from the corn grown there.

Not surprisingly, polenta figures frequently and deliciously in the menu of Polentoni which has several dishes

uniquely from this area that you will not find anywhere else in Edinburgh. The menu changes often with seasonal food availability and a brunch/lunch dish costs around £6-10, with a daily special or two on the blackboard.

Franco’s day begins at 5am in the Bakery at the back of the café where he produces Italian-themed goodies such as brioches for breakfast, ciabatta and focaccia rolls with typical Italian fillings and mini-pizzas for lunch, and delicious cakes for anytime with their excellent coffees, and not forgetting “pane rustico” loaves and a selection of Italian goods.

There is a substantial takeaway clientele, and a cosy café area where you will often find Sarah (and cool music). Hot food is freshly prepared in the back kitchen. Franco and Sarah have clearly made a success of this venture as they are rated within the top 10 Italian restaurants in Edinburgh!



Polentoni, 38 Easter Road
Mon - Sat 08.30 - 17.00 and Sun 09.30 - 15.30

NEW TOPPING & COMPANY BOOKSHOP - OPENING SOON!

We are looking forward to our new neighbour, the **Topping & Company bookshop** (www.toppingbooks.co.uk), opening its doors in the Autumn.

Work is already underway at 2 Blenheim Place to transform this grand building into what will be the largest independent bookshop to open in the country for decades. With hand-crafted bookcases, their signature ‘rolling ladders’ and around 70,000 titles on the shelves, Topping & Company will truly offer us a very special browsing experience - topped off with complimentary tea, coffee and friendly advice! We will all be moving in!

Robert Topping worked with Tim Waterstone in the early days of Waterstone’s before opening his first bookshop in Ely with his wife Louise. Since then they have opened in Bath and St Andrews. Now it is very

much a family affair and their children Hugo and Cornelia will be part of the team in the new Edinburgh shop, along with Duncan Furness who currently heads up the St Andrews bookshop.

We very much look forward to welcoming Duncan and all at Topping & Company in the Autumn and hope to highlight this exciting new venture in a later Newsletter.

This also means that the Terraces will soon become “book-ended”, as we also have Citadel Books at 41 Montrose Terrace run by the Edinburgh Makar and author Alan Spence and his wife Janani and which was featured in our Spring 2018 Newsletter.





OLD ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

Just as Spring arrived and we began to anticipate that the Reporters would have finalised their opinion and reported to Scottish Ministers, we face yet another delay. We should not be surprised as 'delay' seems to be the mantra for this tortuous process. However, there may really be a silver lining in this case.

The Reporters stated at the conclusion of the 5-week long Public Inquiry that they hoped to submit their report to the Scottish Government around the end of March/April. On April 10th all parties heard that the reporters required further information from us. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has very recently updated its policy statement and associated guidance and that these would be the new standards

to be considered by Scottish Ministers. RRCTMA last week submitted their response and update along with all other interested parties. Now the Developers of the proposed hotel get time to submit their response and the process rolls on. General thought is that it is likely to be Autumn before any report is submitted to the Government.

The change in policy has given much clearer guidance on 'the importance of context and understanding' of a site, and the weighting of cultural significance. It also states that 'good decisions take a long-term view'. Much more in the statements would also favour arguments against the hotel project which hopefully might help our cause. Fingers crossed.

ROADS UPDATE

Clearly what affected us most was the partial and then full closure of Carlton Terrace Brae while Leith Street was closed for 3 weeks to allow structural steelwork installation at the St James Centre.

Despite assurances that there would be prior communication with local residents, this did not happen, and the Council implemented a one-way closure of the Brae with limited confusing signage creating significant problems.

After contacting the Police, Roads department and local Councillors it was agreed to fully close the Brae, reducing traffic in both directions along the Terraces. There are clearly lessons to be learned and we have stressed the importance of better communication and prior consultation with local residents.

STOP PRESS - Carlton Terrace Brae to be fully closed from 17.00 Thursday 6th until 07.00 on Tuesday 11th June while Leith Street is closed for further heavy lift operations.

Leith Street - On the subject of Leith Street, you may recall that in 2017 the Council issued notice of various changes mainly to accommodate a cycle path and improved footpaths. The Council received a large number of objections including from the RRCTMA and as a result the plan was referred to the

Scottish Government, which has appointed a Reporter to consider the case. Most objections relate to increased access for cyclists with a proposed permanent closure of Leith Street for most vehicles. We will be asked to submit further evidence supporting our concerns that were about impact on congestion and maintaining free traffic flow from North to South Edinburgh on our side of the City. *We will include updates in Newsletters and emails to members; if you have any views please contact rrcta@live.co.uk*

Electric Vehicles - Also (and only loosely) on Roads, as reported before the Council has committed to encourage the use of electric vehicles as part of efforts to reduce emissions and address high levels of pollution in parts of the City. Some local residents have begun sharing ideas about improving the availability of charging points in our area. *If you are interested in being involved or have any thoughts about this, please contact rrcta@live.co.uk*

Trams - The Tram Team have begun 'Early Contractor Involvement' (ECI) for the project - so it is getting real. This stage is due to finish 9th October 2019, and from then we can expect lane closures and barriers at spots along the route to allow for ground and site investigation - even though the route was supposedly cleared last time around, there is still checking to do! We will update as information comes our way.

BINS

Recently, most people have reported that they have had their bins, grey, red and blue boxes and black bags picked up reasonably well on time by Edinburgh Council waste collection. However, the brown bins (containing garden waste) were not picked up on Regent Terrace on Friday 19th April. One of our committee members filled in the required form to report the missed bin pickup on the Council web site (see our web site www.rrctma.com for details of how to do this). In spite of the Council's promise on their web site to rectify such situations in two working

days and a further telephone call, these brown bins were only picked at the next scheduled pickup day on 3rd May. Let's hope this is a one-off problem and they do better in future. We will watch carefully.

It is irritating that bins left out for extended periods of time are used by passers-by as rubbish bins. The Council refuses to pick up brown bins if they contain anything other than garden waste so you have to regularly clear out any extraneous material yourself if you want them picked up.